

Gonorrhoea is a sexually transmissible infection (STI). It can cause infection of the urethra (the tube that connects the bladder to the outside of the body), anus, throat, cervix (the lower part of the womb) and less commonly, the eyes.

## How did I get infected with gonorrhoea?

Gonorrhoea is transmitted by having anal, oral or vaginal sex without a condom with someone who is currently infected with gonorrhoea.

## What are the symptoms of gonorrhoea?

You may have gonorrhoea and not have any symptoms. If you have symptoms, they may include:

- stinging or burning when passing urine
- redness at the opening of the penis
- discharge from the penis
- pain or tenderness of the testicles
- anal discharge and pain
- sore throat
- sore red eye(s)
- a change in vaginal discharge
- irregular bleeding or heavier than usual periods
- pelvic pain and/or pain during sex
- bleeding after sex

## How is gonorrhoea diagnosed?

To test for gonorrhoea, your health care provider will collect a urine sample or swab from your vagina, mouth or anus. You may be able to collect your own vaginal or anal swabs. Your sample will be sent to the laboratory for testing.

## What is the treatment for gonorrhoea?

Gonorrhoea is usually treated with one antibiotic injection in the buttock together with oral antibiotic tablets. To prevent the spread of the infection or complications, it is important you are treated, even if you have no symptoms.

## What can happen if gonorrhoea is not treated?

Gonorrhoea can cause long-lasting irritation in the penis or pain in the testicles, as well as damage to the tubes that transport sperm. Untreated gonorrhoea may cause infection in the uterus and fallopian tubes known as Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID). PID can have serious effects including infertility, long-lasting pain and ectopic (tubal) pregnancy. If you are pregnant, gonorrhoea can cause complications for you and your baby. It is important to have treatment as soon as you know you have gonorrhoea. Untreated gonorrhoea can also cause joint infections, arthritis and permanent damage to your eye(s).

## Do I need to tell my sexual partner(s)?

Yes. Anyone you have had oral, anal or vaginal sex with in the past 2 months or since your last negative test should get tested.

## When can I have sex again?

It's important that you don't have sex for 7 days after your treatment.

## Do I need more tests after I have been treated?

Yes. You need repeat testing to check the treatment has worked and that you haven't been re-infected. The time you need to wait before the repeat test depends on where in your body the infection is. Your healthcare provider will talk about this with you.

## How do I avoid getting infected again?

- Make sure your current partner(s) are tested and treated.
- Use a condom with new sexual partner(s).

If you need more information or have any questions, please contact the Canberra Sexual Health Clinic on (02) 5124 2184.

### References

Sena, A., & Cohen, M. (2020) *Patient Information: Gonorrhea (Beyond the Basics)*  
<http://www.uptodate.com/contents/gonorrhea-beyond-the-basics>

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